



Re: 2022/2023 Indicative Budget

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Standing Policy Committee on Finance
222 3rd Ave North
Saskatoon, SK
S7K 0J5

Re: 2022 and 2023 Indicative Budget

His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council,

On behalf of NSBA Board and its members, the NSBA is pleased to submit comments concerning the City's annual business plan and budget. The multi-year business plan and budget for the 2022/2023 has been a pressing concern for the NSBA and the whole business community.

At the June 21st Government and Priorities Committee meeting, the Committee's recommendation to City Council was that a municipal property tax target equivalent to 5.96% increase for 2022 and 5.42% increase for 2023 be approved. The NSBA certainly does not agree with the recommendation and the direction to increase property tax for 2022 and 2023.

As is well known, this past year and half has been extremely difficult for business overall in Saskatoon. The COVID-19 pandemic has created hardship for countless businesses, forcing many of them to take drastic measures. Almost all have undertaken significant expense reductions to enable them to keep their operations going, among those that have survived. With the fourth wave of COVID upon us, it's entirely possible that we will be seeing more contraction in our economy. Therefore, now is not the right time to be looking to increase revenues for the City. Rather, we believe that it's time to bring your expenses in line with your revenues.

The NSBA is concerned that the proposed recommendation will hinder the growth of the City's economy. Another reality of COVID is that there is a new and ongoing war to attract the necessary talent to remain competitive. As such, business will need to further invest in their operations to create a more attractive and robust business and working environment. This, along with a potential tax increase, will create additional hardship for Saskatoon businesses.

We believe the City should keep its tax increase consistent with the CPI, at the most. To do so, we would encourage you to look at the expense side of the ledger and find any possible savings. One way we would suggest to potentially provide significant savings is in any and all department FTE requirements. COVID has provided the opportunity for many businesses to analyze their employee requirements and reduce their respective staffs accordingly. We suggest the City should look for similar opportunities.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments at this stage.

Sincerely,

Keith Moen
Executive Director



SASKATOON'S BUSINESS ASSOCIATION